

# Oak Middle School Happenings

SHREWSBURY



**“Respect is Our Cornerstone”**

December 2004

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## Principals' Corner

Dear Parents,

We hope you and your families had a most enjoyable vacation. As we turn the corner into the New Year, our focus is on expansion of our instructional program into more space within the school and maintaining a sharp instructional focus within our classrooms that prepares students to be at their best for MCAS testing and immersed in the other essential learning opportunities available each day. We hope you will be able to catch some of the Middle School News Network viewing opportunities mentioned in the “PTO President’s” portion of this issue of the Happenings.

On the facilities front: Who said the gymnasium “...will be the last of the facilities to come on line”? A Saturday crew refinished the floor last week and we are in hopes that safety systems testing will allow us to use this facility beginning the first week in January. A schedule of work completion is now being developed by the contractor with a target of accessing the remaining space, excepting the Auditorium, by the end of January. Some lighting changes in the Auditorium are in the process of being resolved. Our instructional program in the areas of Art, Music, Technology, Foreign Language as well as  
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## PTO President's Corner

Dear Parents,

PTO sponsored presentations and workshops have become a tremendous resource for parents of the Shrewsbury School District. This year is proving to be no exception.

Over the next several months parents will have the opportunity to attend free Parent Workshops covering topics that directly affect your child. Notices will be sent to all parents prior to the workshop, but mark your calendar now and plan to attend one or more of these excellent presentations. Most presentations are scheduled to start in the evening.

January 26, 2005:	Helping My Child Become a Better Reader and Writer
February 16, 2005:	Overcoming Underachieving
March 10, 2005:	Internet Safety and Search Strategies
March 22, 2005:	Depression and Anxiety in Children
April 28, 2005:	Helping Children who are High Achievers

Robert Evans, author of Family Matters, is  
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Physical Education will be significantly enhanced upon entrance to instructional spaces that allow the teachers within those programs to deliver these programs without current accommodations.

Grade level student “community meetings” were held on Thursday, December 9<sup>th</sup> in our Cafeteria. The purposes of these one hour meetings included enlisting student leadership in creating a positive, safe climate on school buses; responding to questions on facilities issues; expressing appreciation for the students’ partnerships in getting the school off to such a strong start; encouraging students to get the second trimester off to a strong start albeit amidst the holiday season; and celebrating the completion of the first trimester through the talents of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Jazz band under the direction of Mr. Koziara.

MCAS testing is just around the bend. You may wish to take note of the following test dates and weeks:

ELA Composition	Grade 7	April 6, 2005
ELA Composition-Makeup	Grade 7	May 12, 2005
ELA Language and Literature	Grade 7	May 16-27, 2005
Mathematics	Grade 8	May 16-27, 2005
Science and Tech/Engineering	Grade 8	May 16-27, 2005

Our Middle Level Curriculum Coordinators (Ann Jones-Social Studies, Cindy Wilson-Science, Anne Wentzell-Language Arts, Barbara Swidler-Math) are working with teachers within their departments to make sure that grade level trends in collective student scores for the previous year(s) are recognized for instructional significance as well as identifying individual student need for improvement and providing specific resources to address same. Our express emphasis is to improve our students’ performance in each area of assessment by maximizing student proficiency and increasing

the number of students that score at the highest levels of proficiency.

The unique challenges of keeping school days rolling have been a topic of recent conversations among school principals and district administration. In the event buses will not be able to make their route, for reasons other than road conditions (e.g. cold weather starts, vandalism), we will communicate the issue to the community at large and work to get the school day underway adjusting start times as necessary to accommodate the circumstances. Thank you in advance for your partnership in this pursuit.

Best wishes for a healthy and prosperous start to the New School Year.

***Steve Lobban***

***Pam Farrill***

***Beth Schaper***

***(PTO President's Corner, continued from page 1)***

making a one-night appearance and presentation on January 11, 2005. The Shrewsbury School District and PTOs from all schools are pleased to sponsor this event. Robert’s presentation combines humor with a thought-provoking message about childrearing in today’s world. Robert will make you laugh, sneer, jeer and applaud, but mostly he will make you think. Seating is limited for this event, however; if you wish to attend, contact Michael Brand at [academic@townisp.com](mailto:academic@townisp.com) to check seating availability.

During the last couple of months, students from both Oak and Sherwood have been filmed for a new show on Channel 34 titled “Celebrating our Students.” Take the time to watch one of these shows and prepare to be impressed by the quality of the students in our Middle School. New shows will be filmed and aired monthly. You will be amazed at the involvement our kids have in the school community as well as the Shrewsbury community. For a schedule of show times, check the website of the Shrewsbury Media Connection.

From the entire PTO Board, we would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season. We look forward to the second half of the year, and have thoroughly enjoyed your enthusiastic participation and volunteerism in PTO sponsored events.

***Michael Brand***  
***PTO President***

### **PTO News**

#### **Magazine Drive (Please Save your Renewals)**

The next major fundraiser for the Oak and Sherwood Middle Schools will be the annual Magazine Drive in March of 2005. We are asking everyone to save their magazine renewals and/or new subscriptions and support this fundraiser by ordering them through the school in March. Thank you.

### **School Council News**

The OMS Council met on December 1<sup>st</sup> at the Shrewsbury High School's 2002 Room. The results of the meeting included review and recommendation related to the Professional Development portion of the School Improvement Plan as well as development of some general guidelines on minimizing classroom interruptions. Professional Development accomplishments to date include training of all staff to submit electronic grades for Trimester I. This method of grading eliminates the need to scan individual student entries, improves accuracy and reduces clerical time necessary to provide reports to parents. Special thanks to teachers Scott Yonker and Gail Flanagan as well as secretary Cindy Gay for guiding this work. Our second goal of increasing the development and use of interdisciplinary units is well underway with significant teacher participation in a session facilitated by Media Specialist Joan Connors during the November Professional Day. The Council's 2005-2006 Professional Development recommendations included annual staff training in the area of electronic grading and beginning to explore middle level

appropriate applications of standards based reporting in the year ahead.

The Council strongly endorsed the school's efforts to minimize classroom interruptions and maximize time on learning. Toward this end the current practice of delivering left behind items (lunches, homework, etc.) at the students' lunch periods rather than calling into the classroom was strongly supported. Parents are reminded that a single late assignment will not likely make a letter grade difference during a marking period and are encouraged not to rush to get the assignment to school. Another part of the discussion focused on birthday deliveries (e.g. flowers, balloons, cake). All students are receiving birthday recognition throughout the year. It was recommended that individual recognition that impacts on classroom teaching or learning be avoided. Your support in this regard is very much appreciated.

The OMS Council next meets on Wednesday, January 5<sup>th</sup> at the Oak Middle School, in the Media Center from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Current issues as well as review and recommendations related to the "Respectful Community" portion of the School Improvement Plan will be addressed.

### **Nurse's Notes- December 2004**

Dear Oak Middle School Parents,

I have been seeing many children in my office with gastrointestinal symptoms of nausea, stomach cramps, vomiting and diarrhea. I have spoken to some of the other school nurses in town and they are seeing the same illness in their offices.

The cause of this illness is most likely viral gastroenteritis. Often there are other symptoms present such as runny nose, fever, headache and fatigue. The symptoms usually last 3-4 days.

Prolonged or excessive vomiting and/or diarrhea can cause more serious problems, such as dehydration. Signs of dehydration are: marked thirst, dry mouth, sunken eyes, dry skin that wrinkles easily, and dark, scant urine.

Home treatment for gastroenteritis includes avoiding solid foods at first, giving frequent small feedings of clear liquids (anything that you can see through), popsicles, and ice chips. As the condition improves, Jell-O and applesauce may be given. After a period of 8 to 12 hours without vomiting, your child may begin bland foods such as bananas, rice, applesauce, toast and soup/broth. Children should not be sent to school unless they have been free of fever for 24 hours and free of vomiting/diarrhea for at least 12 hours, and are tolerating a normal diet.

See the doctor when the condition is not improving and the child is unable to retain fluids for 8 hours or more; the stool or vomit is bloody or black; there is severe abdominal pain; or there is severe irritability and/or lethargy.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (508) 841-1204.

***Lee-Anne Saccone, MSN, RN***  
***(508) 841-1204***

### **The Home-School Connection**



### **Attend a Parent Workshop Sponsored by Your PTO!**

Dear Parents of Shrewsbury Students,

You are invited to attend the next free workshop in the Pre K–12 PTO sponsored parent workshop series.

**What: Helping my Child Become a Better Reader and Writer**





**When: Wednesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 7-8:30 PM**

**Where: Paton School, Room 2, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor**

**Presenters: Linda Lepiesza**-1<sup>st</sup> grade classroom teacher, Paton School and **Kathy Soderstrom**-4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom teacher, Paton School

The goal of this workshop is to share some tools and resources that will help you enhance your child's literacy skills.

### **This workshop will**

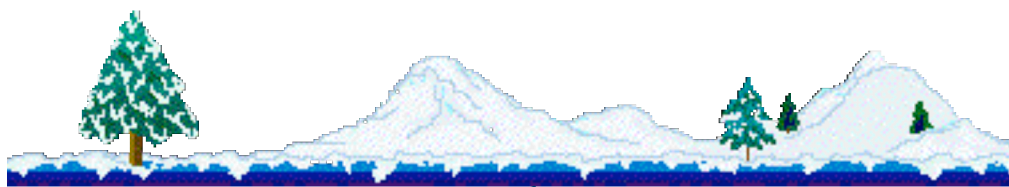
-  Discuss ways to create a home environment that encourages literacy development.
-  Offer ideas to encourage oral language, reading, and writing at home.
-  Demonstrate strategies for understanding reading.
-  Demonstrate strategies for improving writing.

If possible, please RSVP at 508-841-8300 ext. 4220 or email me at [lbuxamusa@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:lbuxamusa@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us). When leaving a message, please include your name and phone number. If you cannot send an RSVP, please do not hesitate to still attend. We would love to see you!

**IMPORTANT:** If Shrewsbury Public Schools are closed that day due to inclement weather conditions, the workshop will be cancelled. Cancellations will be posted on the local educational cable channel (SETV-34).

***Loubaina Buxamusa***  
***Program Coordinator***





## January ~ February 2005

Date	Event	Place	Time
1/6/05	Current Events Competition	Cafeteria	9:30 am
1/7/05	7th/8th PTO Dance	OMS Cafeteria	7:00pm
1/11/05	National Geography Bee	Staff Cafe	8:15am
1/17/05	No school Martin Luther King Day		
1/18/05	Concert 8th green, gold	Cafeteria	6:00pm
1/20/05	Concert 8th red, white, blue	Cafeteria	6:00pm
1/24/05	Concert 7th green, gold	Cafeteria	6:00pm
1/26/05	Concert snow date (18,20,24)	Cafeteria	6:00pm
1/27/05	Concert 7th red, white, blue	Cafeteria	6:00pm
1/31/05	Second Trimester Progress Report to go home		
1/31/05	Concert 7th snow date (27th)	Cafeteria	6:00pm
2/4/05	7th/8th PTO Dance - tentative	Cafeteria	7:00pm
2/9/05	Mathcounts Regional competition	Cafeteria	3:00pm
2/10/05	Mathcounts Regional competition (snow date)	Cafeteria	3:00pm
2/21/05	No School Winter Vacation		
2/22/05	No School Winter Vacation		
2/23/05	No School Winter Vacation		
2/24/05	No School Winter Vacation		
2/25/05	No School Winter Vacation		